

Theoacademy

BEING PRESBYTERIAN
PREPARATION FOR ORDERED MINISTRY

Session 2: Being Leaders



Theocademy

A ministry of the
Synod of Mid-America

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Getting started

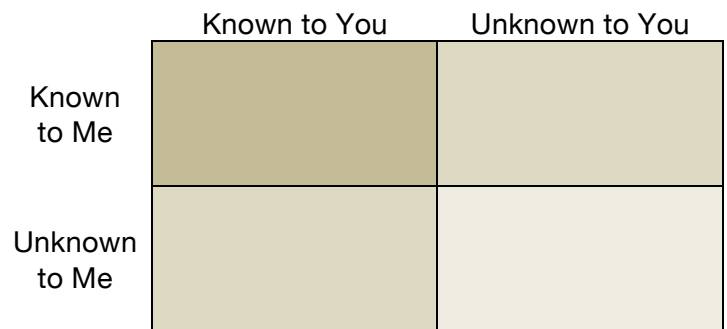
Before watching the video, consider the following questions.

- Who in my life do I consider to be an effective leader? Why?
- What does “effective communication” look like? Why is it important?
- What are some good strategies for conflict resolution that I’ve encountered in the past?

During the video

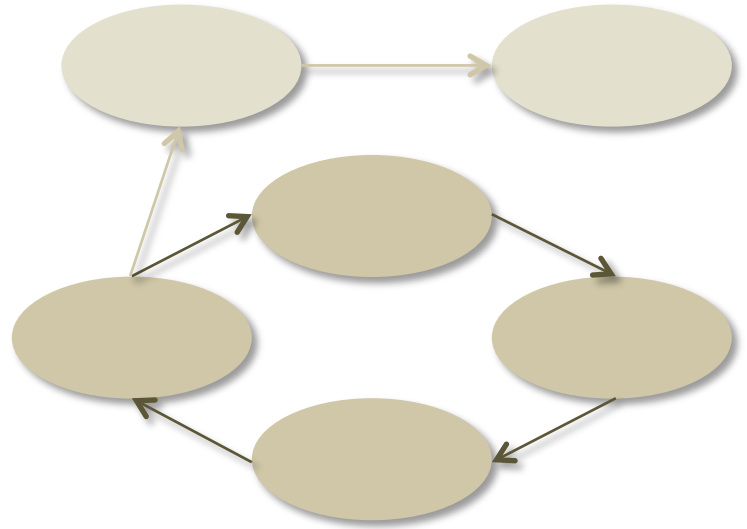
As you watch the video, answer the following questions.

- What is the Johari Window? What kinds of information are represented within it? (Fill in the “panes” in the diagram.)



- Where are the problem areas within the Johari Window? Why do they pose threats?

- What is the “cycle of change?”
Complete the chart describing the process.



- Why are setting and maintaining boundaries key to effective leadership?
- What are the problems with over-functioning and under-functioning in the life of the church?
- What is resiliency? Why is it an important quality for leaders to have?

Looking at all the angles

Read through the following case study, and then discuss the questions that follow.

Your church has brought on two interns for this upcoming semester. Both are in their second year of the Master of Divinity program at the local seminary, and both feel God calling them to work with youth. Aubrey is 24, and grew up in this church. Her entire family has been active for years – her mother is currently the chair of the stewardship committee, her father serves on the board of deacons, and her younger brother is a regular participant in the youth group. She felt the call to ministry early in life, and the church has heartily encouraged her in her path. Jake is 29, and hails from two states away. He studied education in college, and felt God’s call to ministry after five years of teaching high school social studies. He and his parents joined a Presbyterian church after all coming to faith during his junior year of college. Aubrey and Jake have had a few classes together, but previous to this internship have only had a casual acquaintance.

The interns will have two main responsibilities over the four months of their internship: leading the youth group meeting once per month, and coordinating the annual mission project. Jake has looked into various inner-city ministries in the area, and has found a project where the group would spend five days living, working, and worshiping with the staff and residents of a homeless shelter and rehabilitation facility. Aubrey would like to try a “rent-a-student” auction, where youth group members’ services (house cleaning, yard work, etc.) will be sold to the highest bidder and proceeds will go to the church’s mission fund. Likewise, they have different visions of how to structure the youth group meeting during their designated weeks. Aubrey wants to integrate the content they develop into the existing meeting structure; Jake wants to use each of their meeting times to expose the youth to a different style of worship than they’re accustomed to using.

They’ve decided to get together before the internship officially starts to map out their ideas and strategies, and both are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead of them.

- What information is “open” to both Aubrey and Jake?

- What information about Jake is “hidden” to Aubrey? What about Aubrey is “hidden” to Jake?

- What potential “blind spots” does each person have?

- What thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes do you think each intern brings to this situation? How do these affect the choices s/he wants to make?
 - Jake:

 - Aubrey:

- Think about this situation in the context of *your specific church*. What are the likely consequences of each intern's options if they were to be carried out?
- What possible communication hot spots or danger zones do you see here? What issues might need to be handled carefully so to avoid potential conflict?

It's two months into the internship, and the sailing's gotten a little rough. After coming to a compromise on the mission project and youth group meeting arrangements, Aubrey and Jake have made every attempt to continue to provide a united front to the group. However, more often than not, they can't seem to see eye to eye on the approach and implementation of their strategy. Jake is getting more and more frustrated with Aubrey, because she can't seem to keep the kids in line. She never seems to be able to tell them "no," the youth director has observed her brother bullying her a couple of times, and Jake has caught her texting with some of the youth group members during the lesson. Aubrey, meanwhile, is starting to feel a little insulted by the way Jake interacts with her. When the youth director assigns them a project, Jake always seems to take the lead, either assigning Aubrey a peripheral role or leaving her out of the planning altogether. But, at the same time, he complains that he has too much work to do and doesn't know how he's going to be able to get everything done.

- Where do you see issues of boundary maintenance coming into play here? What sorts of problems are arising because of it?
- How is Jake's "over-functioning" affecting Aubrey? Do you think he realizes he's doing it? Why/why not?
- In what ways could this dysfunctional relationship potentially affect the youth group as a whole? What could happen if this situation isn't dealt with productively?

Biblical conflict resolution

In two key passages in the book of Matthew, Jesus instructs his followers how to resolve conflicts:

²³“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.”
Matthew 5:23-26 NRSV

¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
Matthew 18:15-17 NRSV

- The first of these passages deals with times when we have offended others; the second deals with times when others have offended us. What similarities do you see between the two?
- Who is to take the initiative in the reconciliation process? Why?
- Why is reconciliation/conflict resolution a key skill for leaders to have?
- What might the reconciliation process look like for James and Aubrey in the case study above?

Personal reflection

On your own, answer the following questions.

- I can help to maintain open communication with my fellow leaders by _____.
- I can take the initiative to be reconciled with _____.